

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 30, 2004

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, January 28, I was unavoidably detained due to the inclement weather and was not present for votes on S. 1290, a bill to extend for 6 months the period for which chapter 12 of title 11 of the United States Code is reenacted. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on Rollcall No. 10 and "nay" on Rollcall Nos. 8, 9, and 11.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM KOLBE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 30, 2004

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was unavoidably detained and missed the vote on the Baldwin of Wisconsin substitute amendment to S. 1920 (No. 8). I intended to vote "nay."

HONORING JOHN W. LAKE

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 30, 2004

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Representative DOOLEY, Representative NUNES and myself, to honor John W. Lake on the occasion of his being distinguished as an Honorary Alumni Member of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation's California Agricultural Leadership Program. This designation will be bestowed upon Mr. Lake at the annual conference of this organization.

Selection for this distinction is reserved for "special individuals who have, over a period of time, demonstrated consistent commitment and uncommon excellence in the furtherance of education and leadership in California agriculture." The mission of the California Agricultural Leadership Program is to enhance the long-term viability of California agriculture through leadership development, which in turn benefits the people and the communities that agriculture serves.

A native Californian, John graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1970 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mechanical Engineering. He also completed 1 year of graduate work in Mechanical Engineering at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. In 1974, Mr. Lake began his career with Rain for Rent, working his way through the Engineering and Manufacturing Departments and management of Lake and Lake International, irrigation sub-

sidiaries of Western Oilfields Supply Company. He founded Lake Leasing Company in 1983, Rain for Rent's agricultural irrigation equipment financing division. John has served as President and Chief Executive Officer since April of 1990.

Since its beginning in 1934, Western Oilfields Supply Company/Rain for Rent has evolved and expanded in its product offering and the markets it services, providing solutions to temporary liquid-handling problems. Their products and services cover a wide variety of industries, including, but not limited to: construction, petro-chemical, municipal, environmental, agricultural, and other industrial businesses that are serviced by 47 branches and 650 professionals nationwide. During John's tenure as President, the company has expanded into the tank, pump and specialty rental markets.

Mr. Lake is active in the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Advisory Council, the California Agricultural Leadership Program, the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, Quest Club, Idaho Irrigation Association and Safari Club International. John and his wife, Sheila, have two sons and attend Fruitvale Community Church in Bakersfield, California.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with Representative DOOLEY and Representative NUNES to pay tribute to John W. Lake as an Honorary Alumni Member of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation's California Agricultural Leadership Program. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing John many years of continued success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PACIFIC INSULAR AREAS RURAL TELE-MEDICINE ACT

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 30, 2004

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Pacific Insular Areas Rural Telemedicine Act" to provide for better treatment of Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in the health care service supports under the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This bill amends the Act to redesignate the "urban area" for Guam, American Samoa, and the CNMI to be Honolulu, Hawaii. This bill also seeks to define the maximum allowable distance for the Pacific Insular Areas to be the distance between the capital cities of each jurisdiction and Honolulu, Hawaii. Finally, this bill would specify that the urban rate to be used for rate comparison purposes for the rural health care support mechanism will be the urban rate for Hawaii.

The Rural Health Care Program (RHCP) is a universal service support mechanism that provides reduced rates to rural health care providers for telecommunications services re-

lated to the use of telemedicine and telehealth. Currently, the RHCP can fund up to \$400 million annually to ensure that rural health care providers pay no more than those in urban areas for the same or similar telecommunication services. This support is determined based on mileage or a comparison of urban and rural rates.

Under the mileage based support, the RHCP will pay the difference in charges between the standard urban distance (SUD) for each state and the maximum allowable distance (MAD). Under the urban/rural rate comparison, the RHCP will support the difference between the rural health care provider's charges and what the rural health care provider would have been charged if it were located in an urban area of the state.

The designation of an "urban area" and "rural area" determines which health care providers and carriers are eligible for support under the RHCP. In their initial rulemaking for the RHCP, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) designated the urban areas for these Pacific insular areas to be Tutuila in American Samoa, Agana in Guam, and Saipan in the CNMI. These designations were made despite the fact that none of these cities have a population of over 50,000, the threshold used by the FCC in making an urban area designation for a state. By defining the jurisdictions' capital cities as the "urban area" for the RHCP, the health care providers in these Pacific insular areas have been informed that the RHCP telecommunication discounts would only be applicable to interconnecting health care facilities in remote locations within their jurisdictions. For Guam, there are no health care facilities that would benefit from this definition. For American Samoa and the CNMI, the only health care facilities that would qualify are those located on remote islands within the political boundaries of their territories.

The health care providers in the Pacific insular areas reflect the size, remoteness, and economic status of their communities. They seek access to advanced medical facilities, specialists and health professions education programs to better serve their rural and remote communities. The populations of these Pacific insular areas are approximately 57,000 for American Samoa, 155,000 for Guam, and 69,000 for the CNMI. These jurisdictions, in their entirety, are classified as "rural areas" and qualify for the rural development programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The FCC designation of the capital cities of these jurisdictions as "urban" has prevented the HCPs in these remote, rural areas access to much needed services.

The FCC has recognized that its current regulations may disadvantage health care providers in the Pacific insular areas. In 2002, the FCC issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to review the rural health care universal service support mechanism and requested comments how to address this issue. Comments submitted by the health care providers in Guam, American Samoa, the CNMI and telecommunications carriers that service

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